

IN SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

JANUARY 15, 1846.

Submitted, and ordered to be printed.

Mr. BENTON made the following

REPORT:

[To accompany bill S. No. 50.]

*The Committee on Military Affairs, to whom was referred the petition of Mrs. General Pike, praying for compensation for extraordinary services rendered by her late husband when a lieutenant in the army of the United States, in conducting two expeditions of a scientific character, one in the years 1805-'26 to the sources of the Mississippi, the other in 1806-'27 to the sources of the Arkansas and Great Platte, and through New Mexico, respectfully report :*

That, in considering the subject referred to them, the committee deemed it right to look back to the documentary history of the times, and to see what light it would shed upon the nature of the services rendered by the then lieutenant Pike in the said expeditions, and the action of the government, if any, in relation to them. In pursuing this investigation, they find, that the question of granting compensation to Captain Pike and his companions for their services in these expeditions was brought before the House of Representatives in the year 1808, and referred to a committee, which made a detailed report highly creditable to Lieutenant Pike and the men under his command, declaring that the information collected in the expeditions was highly valuable in a political, geographical, and historical point of view ; and concluding with expressing the opinion that compensation ought to be made by law to Captain Pike and his companions, and reporting a bill for that purpose. The report of that committee is here reproduced and presented to the Senate as the most authentic and satisfactory mode of reporting upon the present petition of Mrs. Pike, and is prayed to be taken as part of the report of your committee. It is as follows :

*" Compensation to persons engaged in the several exploring expeditions under Captain Pike.*

*" [Communicated to the House of Representatives, December 16, 1808.]*

*" Mr. John Montgomery, from the committee to whom was referred the resolution to inquire whether any, and, if any, what compensation ought to be made to Captain Zebulon M. Pike, and his companions, for their*

services in exploring the Mississippi river, in their late expedition to the sources of the Osage, Arkansas, and La Platte rivers, and in their tour through New Spain, made the following report :

“That it appears, by the documents accompanying this report, that the objects of each of the exploring expeditions, together with the instructions for executing them, were communicated to and approved by the President of the United States ; that the conduct of Captain Pike, in each of the expeditions, also met with the approbation of the President, and that the information obtained and communicated to the Executive on the subjects of his instructions, and particularly in relation to the sources of the Mississippi and the natives in that and the quarter country, generally, as well on the upper Mississippi as between the Arkansas and the Missouri, and on the borders of the latter extensive river to its source, and the country adjacent, is highly interesting in a political, geographical, and historical view ; and that, although no special encouragement was given to the individuals who performed these laborious and dangerous expeditions, yet it was but reasonable for them, should they fortunately succeed in the objects, to expect to meet some reward from government ; that the zeal, perseverance, and intelligence of Captain Pike, as commander, has been meritorious, and the conduct of the individuals generally who composed the parties respectively, has been faithful, and the exertions arduous. The committee, therefore, are of opinion that compensation ought to be made by law to Captain Pike and his companions.”

Annexed to this report are several letters from the War Department and from General Wilkinson, in relation to the orders under which Lieutenant Pike acted, and the services which he performed, of which your committee select two as containing the essence of the others ; one from the then Secretary at War, General Dearborn, to Lieutenant Pike, and the other from the same Secretary to the committee, in which the valuable services of Lieutenant Pike are fully acknowledged ; and that, although no special encouragement was given to Lieutenant Pike and his men, yet it was but reasonable for them, in the event of the successful accomplishment of their enterprise, to expect a liberal reward ; to the granting of which the Secretary could see no objection.

The letters are as follows :

“WAR DEPARTMENT, *December 7, 1808.*

“SIR: I herewith enclose copies of the instructions to Lieutenant Pike for the government of his conduct on the two exploring expeditions alluded to in your letter, and likewise lists of the names of the men composing those parties. You will perceive that the instructions were given by General Wilkinson ; the object, however, of each party, together with the instructions, were communicated to and approved by the President of the United States.

“Although no special encouragement was given to the individuals who performed these laborious and dangerous expeditions, yet it was but reasonable for them, should they fortunately succeed in their objects, to expect a liberal reward from the government ; and, as there can be no reasonable doubt of the zeal, perseverance, and intelligence of the commander, or of the faithful conduct and arduous exertion of the individuals generally

composing the respective parties, it may, I trust, be presumed that no objection will be opposed to a reasonable compensation for such meritorious services.

"I am, very respectfully, sir, your obedient servant,

"H. DEARBORN.

"Hon. J. MONTGOMERY, *Chairman, &c.*"

WAR DEPARTMENT, *February 24, 1808.*

"SIR: In answer to your letter of the 22d instant, I can with pleasure observe, that although the two exploring expeditions you have performed were not previously ordered by the President of the United States, there were frequent communications on the subject of each between General Wilkinson and this department, of which the President of the United States was, from time to time, acquainted; and it will be no more than what justice requires, to say that your conduct, in each of those expeditions, met the approbation of the President; and that the information you obtained and communicated to the Executive, in relation to the source of the Mississippi and the natives in that quarter, and the country generally, as well on the upper Mississippi as that between the Arkansas and the Missouri, and on the borders of the latter extensive river to its source, and the country adjacent, has been considered highly interesting in a political, geographical, and historical view. And you may rest assured that your services are held in high estimation by the President of the United States; and if any opinion of my own can afford you any satisfaction, I very frankly declare that I consider the public much indebted to you for the enterprising, persevering, and judicious manner in which you have performed them.

"I am, very respectfully, sir, your obedient servant,

"H. DEARBORN.

"Captain Z. M. PIKE."

It is thus seen from the cotemporary documentary history of the times, that a liberal compensation was considered due to Lieutenant Pike and his men, for their meritorious services in the two expeditions mentioned. The next inquiry is, whether they received such compensation at the time? and to this inquiry both the widow of General Pike and the accounting officers of the Treasury reply in the negative; and the legislative history of the case, as far as it can be traced, gives the same answer. It appears, from the Journals of the House of Representatives, that a bill was reported for making compensation to Lieutenant Pike and his companions, and that it remained among the business not acted upon by the House. It is considered, therefore, as certain that no compensation was made to Lieutenant Pike for these extraordinary services at the time they were performed, and his glorious death soon after in the public service was the probable cause why no further attention was paid to the case until the present application of his widow. This being the case, your committee can see no reason why that liberal reward should not be allowed to the widow, who has been so long bereaved of the support of her husband, which a committee of the House of Representatives, and the honorable

Secretary at War, believed to be due to him as far back as the year 1808; and they report a bill accordingly.

The only point which required further determination from your committee was the amount of compensation which they should recommend; and on this point they have to regret their inability to state the amount recommended by the House committee of 1808, the bill then reported having been destroyed when the capitol was burnt by the British during the late war, and the Journals of the House presenting, as usual, nothing but the title of the bill and the proceedings upon it. Deprived of this reference for finding a measure of compensation, your committee have looked into cases of analogous services on which Congress have acted, and find that in the case of Lewis and Clark, for their expedition to the Pacific ocean, double pay was allowed by law to themselves and their men, with 1600 acres of land each to the commanders of the expedition, and 640 acres each to their men, the whole receivable in payment of public lands at two dollars per acre; and in the late exploring expedition Lieutenant Wilkes was allowed fifteen hundred dollars per annum of extra pay, and his subordinate officers engaged in scientific pursuits were also allowed extra pay, according to their respective grades. The double pay and the land allowed to Messrs. Lewis and Clark would probably not vary much from the compensation, according to time, allowed to Lieutenant Wilkes: the annual compensation of each would be near about the same; and taking this as the measure in Mrs. Pike's case, the committee would arrive at the sum of fifteen hundred dollars per annum as the fair amount of compensation to be allowed to her. The committee think it better, in the case of a widow, to make the compensation in the simple form of a gross sum, instead of double pay and land, as in the case of Lewis and Clark, and accordingly report a bill for the sum of three thousand dollars for the two years that the late Lieutenant Pike was engaged in the two expeditions for which compensation is asked.